



**goliad**  
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## Government agencies didn't uphold own standards

Art Dohmann is the president of the **Goliad** County Groundwater Conservation District.

By BY ART DOHMANN

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On Dec. 4, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued the aquifer exemption for in situ

uranium mining in the top four drinking water supply sands near Ander in **Goliad** County.

In March 2011, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) approved this aquifer exemption over the objection of the administrative law judge, who stated that the permit should be

remanded for additional technical evaluation or, in the alternate, that the permit be denied.

When the aquifer exemption was sent to the EPA by TCEQ, the EPA determined that the application

was incomplete. Over an extended period, the EPA requested hydrologic data to assist it in making its

decision as "the protection of drinking water is one of the EPA's highest priorities." This included that

modeling be done to determine if a link existed between the aquifer exemption area and adjacent drinking water supply wells. Additionally, the EPA requested that a pump test be performed across

the southeast fault to document its hydrologic characteristics. There is no public information that any

of this hydrologic data was ever provided.

Federal and state statutes mandate that the TCEQ and the EPA protect a source of drinking water,

which in this application is the Evangeline Aquifer. A number of critical hydrologic questions have

not been answered, so the question if the drinking water outside the boundary of the aquifer exemption is protected is unanswered. The **Goliad** County Groundwater Conservation District (GCGCD) does not concur that the TCEQ or the EPA performed the necessary due diligence required

by the statutes to protect this drinking water supply. In addition, if this water supply becomes contaminated as a result of in-situ uranium mining, TCEQ and the EPA will provide no remedy. Environmental protection is a critical part of a responsible government.

The TCEQ ignored the recommendations of the administrative law judge and then refused to assist

the EPA in the attempt by the EPA to confirm the hydrologic evaluation. In the end, the EPA

approved the aquifer exemption without fulfilling its stated obligation.

The Goliad County Groundwater Conservation District has been monitoring water quality around the

perimeter of the now-approved aquifer exemption boundary for the last six years. The district is committed to the programs necessary to maintain an adequate supply of good quality drinking water

vital to the citizens and economy of Goliad County. The district appreciates the support that it has

received from Goliad County groundwater users, and we ask for that continued support.

Art Dohmann is the president of the Goliad County Groundwater Conservation District. Readers with

questions or comments may contact Art Dohmann at 361-564-2026, or the Groundwater District office at 361-645-1716.

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